

Faculty of Music: University of Toronto
Opera Department



THE MARRIAGE OF
FIGARO

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Production
MacMillan Theatre: March 16, 17, 18, 19: 1972

THE OPERA DEPARTMENT

presents

The Marriage of Figaro

by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

*Libretto by Lorenzo da Ponte,
based on the comedy by Beaumarchais*

*English Translation by Ruth and Thomas Martin**

Conductor	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	ERNESTO BARBINI
Director	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	HERMAN GEIGER-TOREL
Stage Design	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	MARTHA MANN
Costume Design	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	SUZANNE MESS
Lighting Design	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	DAVID GRINSTEAD
Chorus Master	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	LLOYD BRADSHAW
Choreographer	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	LOIS SMITH
Recitative Accompanist	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	ERNESTO BARBINI

CAST

	March 16 and 18	March 17 and 19
FIGARO	DONALD ODDIE	BRUCE KELLY
SUSANNA	ANN COOPER	VERONICA KALFMAN
BARTOLO	JOHN DODINGTON	JOHN DODINGTON
MARCELLINA	NANCY GREENWOOD	JANE O'BRIEN
CHERUBINO	MICHELE DOWSETT	LYNDA CULHAM
COUNT	PETER BARCZA**	CORNELIS VERLAAN
BASILIO	EDWARD MATTHIESSEN	BARNEY INGRAM, JR.
COUNTESS	STEPHANIE BOGLE	JEAN ANN GOOCH
ANTONIO	BRUCE KELLY	DONALD ODDIE
CURZIO	GLYN EVANS	DANIEL SHALANKO
BARBARINA	PENNY SPEEDIE	YOUNG-AE KIM
PEASANT GIRLS	PENNY SPEEDIE	CAROL INCH
	JANE O'BRIEN	STEPHANIE NORTON

Time: Eighteenth Century

Setting: Count Almaviva's chateau of Aguas Frescas near Seville

All performances commence at 8:00 p.m.

Fifteen minute intermission after Acts I and II, five minutes after Act III

*By Arrangement with G. Schirmer, Inc.

**Peter Barcza is appearing through the courtesy of Actors' Equity Association

THE BOOK
OPERA AND THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

1946 - 1971

PUBLISHED TO CELEBRATE THE

25TH ANNIVERSARY

OF THE OPERA DEPARTMENT

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THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES:

Act. I: An undecorated room in the Count's palace.

Act. II: The Countess' chamber.

Act. III: A Hall in the palace.

Act. IV: The garden by moonlight.

Beaumarchais' comedy "Le Mariage de Figaro" was a sequel to "Le Barbier de Seville", and some knowledge of the previous story is necessary, to the understanding of the complicated, though masterfully devised, plot of the present opera. "Le Barbier" tells how Count Almaviva succeeded in marrying Rosina, in spite of jealous opposition from her guardian, Doctor Bartolo, who had intended to marry her himself. The principal agent in the Count's scheme was the omniscient barber Figaro; and further comic-opera trappings involved Marcellina, the Doctor's discarded mistress, and Don Basilio, the cunning and conniving music-master.

In spite of its farcical complications, "Le Mariage" gave witty expression to the disillusion and dissatisfaction of pre-Revolution France. So keen was its social satire, indeed, that its production at the French court was delayed for nearly four years and it was banned completely in several other European centres. The author's sharpest barb was aimed at the so-called "droit du seigneur", the right of the feudal lord over a female vassal who is promised in marriage to another servant.

At the opening of the opera, the Count and Rosina have been married long enough for the Count to long for more amorous adventures. Figaro has been taken into the Count's service as a valet, and Basilio as court organist and go-between in his master's love affairs. The present object of the Count's infatuation is the pretty maid Susanna, who is betrothed to Figaro. The scene opens in the bridal chamber of the young couple, on the morning of their wedding day. Figaro, in good spirits, remarks how conveniently near their rooms are to those of the Count and the Countess; but Susanna fears that this arrangement may be a crafty design to give the Count access to her chamber. Figaro vows that he will match his master's cunning.

Bartolo and Marcellina now appear and reveal that they are bound to have revenge on Figaro by compelling him to marry Marcellina. The latter exchanges catty insults with Susanna, whose love for Figaro is one of the few really constant elements of the plot.

The youthful page Cherubino, who, it is soon apparent, loves every lady in Christendom, is forced to hide on the unexpected entrance of the Count, since the Count has only just banished Cherubino because of his flirtations. The entrance of Basilio forces the Count himself to take cover. He is outraged to overhear the tale of Cherubino's attachment to the Countess, and yet embarrassed to realize a few moments later that the page has overheard his own advances to Susanna. In the midst of the ensuing confusion, Figaro enters with a group of happy peasants, and subtly asks that the Count place the wedding-veil on Susanna's brow, as a sign that the "droit du seigneur" is relinquished. The Count, bound to keep his lordly dignity despite his embarrassment, postpones the ceremony to a more impressive occasion. He turns on Cherubino and, partly in anger and partly in fear of the young page's tongue, sends him to take up a new post in the regiment at Seville.

At the rise of the curtain on Act Two the Countess is found musing upon her husband's faithlessness. Figaro and Susanna discuss with their mistress two plots they have set to trap the amorous Count: an anonymous letter has been sent to the Count warning him that his wife has a rendezvous with a lover in the garden that night; at the same time Susanna arranges a rendezvous with the Count, planning to have her place taken by the disguised Cherubino. The two ladies take the opportunity of the Count's supposed absence to rehearse the page in his role, and incidentally to give Cherubino an excuse for more flirtations. There is a sudden knock at the door and the Count's voice demanding entrance sends Cherubino scurrying into an inner room and Susanna into an alcove. The enraged Count goes to find tools to break in the door where he suspects someone to be hiding, and as an extra precaution takes his wife with him. Before he returns, Susanna helps Cherubino to escape through the window and takes his place in the inner chamber. The Countess, to pacify her husband, tells him that it is only Cherubino in the inner room, and that there is no reason for his

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Chairman, EZRA SCHABAS

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CREDITS

The Opera Department wishes to express its appreciation to the following for their assistance and co-operation:

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NEXT EVENT: University of Toronto Concert Choir, March 22, 1972,
MacMillan Theatre, 8:30 p.m.

jealous fury. The Count is flabbergasted further when, on finally opening the door, he discovers only Susanna. Feeling that they already have the upper hand, the ladies explain to the Count that the anonymous letter was Figaro's work. This comforts him, and reconciliation seems in view when Figaro enters to bid the Count to the wedding festivities and has to answer his master's accusations about the letter. The half-tipsy gardener Antonio brings in a damaged flower-pot, and the Count's suspicions are again aroused by his story that a man has jumped from the window. To save matters, Figaro loudly asserts that he was the man who jumped. But Antonio replies that the culprit was scarcely half Figaro's size, and produces a paper which was dropped in the escape and which of course turns out to be Cherubino's commission. Figaro resourceful as ever, admits that he had carried the page's commission in his pocket because "it needed sealing". Again the Count is checkmated.

Marcellina, Bartolo, and Basilio rush onto the scene and demand that the Count hold Figaro to his old agreement to marry Marcellina. The Count, like the rest of us, needs time to think, and so he reserves judgment.

As Act Three starts, Susanna is persuaded to promise the Count a secret meeting; her place is to be taken by the Countess. While the Count reflects on the delightful prospect of the rendez-vous, he overhears Susanna telling Figaro that the case with Marcellina has been won without a lawyer, and once more he suspects that he is being duped, and swears to make Figaro wed Marcellina. That lady now enters, with Bartolo, Figaro, and the judge Curzio, who explains that by reason of an old debt Figaro must either marry Marcellina or pay her two thousand pieces of silver. This arrangement is approved by the Count, but in no time it is revealed that Figaro is actually the stolen Rafaello, the natural son of Marcellina and Bartolo. The family reunion is interrupted by Susanna, who has somehow raised the money for her Figaro's freedom and is disquieted on her entrance to find him in the arms of Marcellina.

The unhappy Countess pours out her anxiety and her longing for the return of her husband's affection. She dictates to Susanna a letter to the Count, fixing the time and place of the arranged meeting. The letter is sealed with a pin, and on the back is written: "Send back the seal".

Barbarina, the gardener's daughter, brings a group of peasant girls to present flowers to their lady. Among the girls is the blushing Cherubino in female disguise. Antonio reveals the page's identity, and the Count's rage against Cherubino and his rising suspicion of his wife are only abated by Barbarina's request that she be permitted to marry Cherubino. Figaro urges that they get on with the festivities; the bridal march is played and a fandango danced. As Susanna kneels to receive the Count's congratulations she slips the letter into his hand. The Count breaks up the gathering and promises that the wedding will take place that evening amid singing, feasting, and fireworks.

For Act Four the scene moves to the moonlit garden. Poor Barbarina has lost the pin which the Count bade her give Susanna. This news she innocently conveys to Figaro and Marcellina, and the latter goes off to warn Susanna. It is now Figaro's turn to be jealous and suspicious. He swears to redeem not only himself but the whole race of injured husbands. He conceals himself as the Countess and Susanna enter dressed in each other's clothes. Susanna sings of her love for Figaro, who she knows is in hiding nearby; Figaro of course thinks this song is meant for the Count. Now complication follows on complication: Cherubino makes love to the Countess, thinking she is Susanna, and is discovered by the Count; the Count, also tricked by his wife's disguise, eagerly asks that she join him in the pavilion; Figaro, believing Susanna to be the Countess, urges her to overtake the faithless pair, but when Susanna falls into her natural speech momentarily Figaro realizes her identity. As the final trick of tricks, Figaro and Susanna act out a little love scene before the Count, who has returned, and the latter seizes Figaro and calls on the whole assembly to witness the treachery of his valet and his lady. He is adamant when Susanna, still in the Countess' guise, begs his forgiveness, but contrite on the entry of the real Countess. And so there is forgiveness, reunion, and general rejoicing all round.

—JOHN BECKWITH.

(The above plot-synopsis is reprinted without change from the program of December 9-11, 1948, when FIGARO was first presented in Eaton Auditorium by the (then) Royal Conservatory Opera School.)